

Anahuac TX 11/29/92

PRAYER

PRAYER

Introduction:

1. **Prayer**--The expression to the Father of a heart felt need or desire. A petition, a request, an entreaty. Prayer also includes confessions and thanksgivings.
2. It proceeds from the natural instincts and impulses of every feeling and from a grateful heart. Everyone who has a proper sense of his dependence on God will ask his favor; everyone who has a proper appreciation of the benefits received will express to him his gratitude.
3. Prayer is one of the **Five Avenues** whereby we have access to the throne of God. We spoke last week of our worship, with the promise we would discuss the five avenues or paths to Heaven. Prayer brings us before Jehovah. Very important!!!

BODY:

I. THOUGHTS ABOUT PRAYER:

1. Jesus taught us how to and how not to pray. Luke 18:1, 9:14, Pharisee and Publican.
2. Jesus taught his disciples to pray.
 - A. Mt. 6:1-8--Introductory remarks
 - B. Mt. 6:9-15--Model prayer for the disciples.
3. Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane (Lk 22:39-46) give us a perfect example of expression.
4. Jesus prays for his disciples and for unity among them -- John 17:1-26.
5. The writers of the N.T. tell us so often about prayer: Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess 5:17
6. The early Christians give us an example of a praying church: Acts 2:42; 4:24; 6:4,6; 8:22,24; 9:11; 12:5,12; 13:3; 16:25; 20:36.

II. PRAYER IS A PRIVILEGE OF THE CHRISTIAN: (CHART)

Mt. 7:7-11; 18:19; 21:22; Lk. 18:1-8; Jn 14:13,14; 15:7; Phil 4:6; 1 Thess 5:17;
1 Jn 5:14; Jas 5:16-18; These are but a few of the many passages that teach upon the very important subject of prayer. The Book runneth over with passages.

III. BENEFITS WE GAIN THROUGH AND FROM PRAYER:

1. Prayer serves to increase and broaden our own spiritual nature:
 - a. In prayer, the conscience is awakened; there we see ourselves in the light of Heaven. We are on holy ground, as Moses when he stood before the burning bush.
 - b. Led Christ to say--Mt 6:6--go in the closet.
2. Prayer helps us to form a habit of close and intimate union, communion, and fellowship with God.

- a. Everyone forms habits. Evil habits are easy to form, hard to break. The drunkard, *the* gambler, etc., are drawn to their evil habits, even though they despise the path *they* have chosen to follow. They curse the path, then walk on it.
- b. But the man who forms the habit of prayer finds help and encouragement along *the* way. In no other way are we brought more closer to God.

3. Prayer helps to keep us from evil: "Our worst enemies are our own lusts and passions. But these may all be very much weakened and even subdued through the influence of prayer. How can a man, for instance, cherish pride in his heart while he is honestly communing with his Maker? How can he cultivate a spirit of revenge while he is imploring the forgiveness of Him who has said, 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord?' How can he indulge in anger, wrath, malice, or any of the other works of *the* flesh while he is seeking for the aid of that blessed Spirit whose fruits are always 'love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, and temperance?' Prayer, properly offered, must always have a soothing influence on the affections." (Scheme of Redemption)
4. Prayer secures to us and for us much positive good by fulfilling a condition on which God has promised that he will bestow his blessings. It reaches God himself. It moves the arm that moves and governs the universe. **GOD ANSWERS PRAYERS--CHART**
 - a. Deut. 9:13-19--Moses intervenes for the people of God.
 - b. 1 Sam 1:11--Hanna had no child, she prayed, God gave her a child.
 - c. 1 Kgs. 20:1-6--Hezekiah prayed and God answered his prayer.
 - d. James 5:16-18--James prayed, it rained not; he prayed again, it rained.
5. Prayer is a powerful and divinely appointed means of convicting, converting, and saving others.
 - a. This is especially true of the family. The relation of a parent to a child is one of *the* nearest, dearest on earth. The child sees the dependency of the parent upon the Heavenly Father, as he sees that parent praying. Prayer teaches dependency. We teach our children so many things, by the examples we set before them. **HOW URGENT THAT WE TEACH THEM TO PRAY, TO RELY UPON JEHOVAH.**

III. CONDITIONS TO BE MET BEFORE A PRAYER IS ACCEPTABLE:

1. Must be offered in faith--Rom. 14:23; Heb. 11:6.
2. Must be offered in spirit of obedience--Prov. 28:9;
3. Must be offered in humility and reverence--Jas. 4:6. "God bless me, because look *who* I am!" We must report for duty; not give commands to God.
4. Must be offered in spirit of forgiveness--Mt. 6:15.
5. Must be offered through Christ as the Mediator of the New Covenant--John 16:23-26
John 14:13; Col. 3:17; Eph 5:19,20; Heb. 4:14-16.